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ABSTRACT

The role of teachers serving as policy board members of the Metrolina Educational Consortium (MEC) in North Carolina is discussed. The MEC is concerned with teacher education programs and is composed of classroom teachers, college representatives, local education agency staff, and state education department staff. The board members are mandated to consider the following six questions: (1) Have teachers contributed to the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs? (2) Have teachers helped to establish the managerial structure of the consortium? (3) Have teachers helped establish entry levels of competence for the program? (4) Have teachers contributed to the procurement of resources? (5) Have teachers had a role in designating experiences to meet needs (i.e. to design programs and needs assessment questionnaires)? and (6) Have teachers helped determine the exit level of their participants? It is concluded that, unlike a number of teacher education programs, the MEC has had a parity arrangement among the board members representing teachers, administrators, and education officials. It is noted that in the case of a consortium, there is a good chance that at least one of the teachers will be a special education teacher. Specific concerns of special education teachers are noted, regarding the following: competencies needed by applicants for a program in special education, teacher input for the design of practicum experiences for special education teachers, and the exit level of competence of participants. (SW)

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MEC ANNUAL CONVENTION
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PROFESSIONAL SESSION

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REFLECTIONS ON THE MEC CONSORTIUM: CLASSROOM TEACHER AS TEACHER EDUCATOR

April 4, 1983
ROOM 3176, COBO HALL, M-25
2:00-3:30 P.M.

The following is a working paper on staff development from the point of view of a classroom teacher who is a policy board member of a voluntary collaborative interagency program. The three other agencies, in addition to that of the classroom teachers, are institutions of higher education, the administration of the local education agency, and the representatives of the State Department of Public Instruction.

The History of the Metrolina Educational Consortium

The voluntary collaborative interagency program, the Metrolina Educational Consortium, for the past two years has "been on the books." For its first year it functioned at a planning committee level. During almost all of its second year, it operated as an ad hoc committee. Near the end of its second year, it became a policy board, and following its review by the state accrediting agency, it subsequently received approval and became a full-fledged consortium. Presently it is operating two programs, one for coordinating teachers, and another for vocational teachers.

EC 160088

Without the collaboration of these four agencies, these two programs would have been impossible, and without the voluntary component of the consortium, the programs would have been much less imaginative than they now are.

At its inception, the consortium was charged with developing and implementing:

(1) training programs for probationary teachers

(2) advanced programs not available through institutions of higher education,

(3) the management and monitoring of staff development activities,

(4) effective mechanisms for accessing resources,

(5) a system of program evaluation,

(6) recruitment, selection, and placement for staff development,

(7) negotiation of supportive changes with participating organizations,

(8) a cadre for conducting collaborative research and evaluative activities responsive to the immediate needs of classroom teachers and administrators, and

(9) a creative, professional environment.

In my own opinion, items (1), (2), and (8) are of a programmatic nature; items (3), (6), and (7) are of a management nature; (4) is of a material nature; and (5) and (9) are of an evaluative nature. The classroom teacher usually is the recipient of programs, usually provides the labor for carrying out the plans of management, sometimes profits from material changes, and rarely, except in his or her own classroom, willingly is involved in evaluation.

These nine goals have served as guidelines, and in the case of the two programs aforementioned, those teachers needing certification that was not available from nearby institutions of higher education, have been able to receive programs that deal with job-embedded programs and certification helpful for career advancement. The other goals will emerge here and there in the rest of this paper.

The MEC and the Staff Development Center of C-M

The Metrolina Educational Consortium (MEC) is located in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district, a district serving more than 70,000 students. Charlotte-Mecklenburg (C-M) has a viable staff development center that among other things conducts workshops for teachers and administrators and staff, and serves as a brokerage for a half-dozen teacher training institutes of higher education in the vicinity of C-M. From the outset (as Items 6 and 7 testify), collaborative relations between the Staff Development and the MEC have been desired. On the other hand, the MEC does not envisage itself as a course-by-course operation. Furthermore, what is unique about MEC is that its programs issue out of voluntary collaboration between and among its four components [classroom teachers, IHE, LEA (administration), and SEA (SDPI representatives)]. In its decisions to hire a director or to accept programs, or to accept students, or to exit students, the four components of the program have an equal vote. Unique for the classroom teacher is that for the first time, with regard to teacher education programs, he finds himself on the dispensing rather than on the receiving end.

For Whom Does the Classroom Teacher Speak?

The new opportunities, privileges, and responsibilities for the classroom teacher constitute the real burden of this paper. After discussing this issue, this paper will raise several questions by which the consortium was charged in its evaluation by the Division of Certification. In conclusion it will raise some questions that those in C.E.C. who are interested in replicating the Consortium must answer.

Teachers have to ask themselves, as board members, whether or not they are speaking for a given constitutency: for secondary or elementary teachers, or for teachers of the handicapped, or for itinerant or vocational or for teachers of the gifted and talented, or for regular classroom teachers. Teachers on the Consortium Board have to ask themselves if they are reflecting the needs of their constitutencies or their school building or their professional organization, or the districts (within the school system) that they represent on the Teacher Advisory Council that brought them to their post on the consortium in the first place. Or are teachers speaking from their best informed professional judgment? Or, rather than caucusing and reaching conclusions on their priorities or their agenda, are teachers speaking as four separate individuals? They have to ask if their speaking candidly puts them in jeopardy, vis-a-vis the administrators. They have to ask if the representatives from higher education consider those who are in "lower education" as having equal metaphysical status? They have to ask themselves if they regard the representatives of the SDPI as bureaucrats, or as professionals with a teaching clout of

their own? They have to determine if they are willing to sit as adversaries or as equals in this created air of mutual respect and trust.

State-Mandated Questions

Regardless as to how they answer the above questions, the teachers and other members of the policy board are mandated by the state and its accrediting agency that evaluates the consortium, to continue to face the following six questions that reflect the guidelines faced by the consortium during its entire career of approval seeking.

Have Teachers Contributed to the Development, Implementation, & Evaluation of Programs?

Was there teacher input in the planning for, and the implementation of, and the evaluation of the consortium? The teachers were the last on board, and in some cases have been the first to leave. Their being a transient population reflects both problems of facing all of their responsibilities, and also in other factors. Their input with regard to the planning then was minimal, but in the implementation and evaluation of the consortium, the teachers have had an increasing amount of input. Teachers have tried to sensitize other members to the difficulties classroom teachers face in just coming to the meetings. In some cases teachers have been expected, or they even expected of themselves, to rubber stamp decisions of others. But the teachers have learned to be judicious with their vote and to give their endorsement, whether it be in evaluating programs or securing directors or implementing programs, only when and if they see such decisions as beneficial to teacher needs.

Have Teachers Helped to Establish the Managerial Structure of the Consortium?

To what extent have teachers helped to establish the managerial structure or the governance of the consortium? Although it is an old profession, unlike that of medicine or law or religion, teaching is the last to share in the governance of itself. Even so, teachers on the consortium have been chairmen of the board, have interviewed prospective directors, and have helped codify policy manuals and job descriptions. These roles on the consortium have helped teachers to become a bit more sophisticated in the questions they are asking themselves.

Have Teachers Helped Establish Entrance Levels of Competence?

Have teachers helped to establish the levels of competence required to get into the programs? The two programs presently operating have met with the approval of the classroom teachers. In one case, the requirement was presently to be a coordinating teacher, and in the other, to have a fifth-year certificate in some area of vocational education. The question the teachers have consistently asked, however, is whether or not the entrance requirement ought to be that a given group of teachers is designated by the administration for advancement, or whether or not it ought to be in terms of some other criteria. The policy presently being formulated has clearly the impact of teacher concerns. All groups will be encouraged to seek to develop a program, but all will be accepted or rejected according to prescribed standards.

In response to its eighth guidline, the Consortium seeks to develop a cadre of teachers who are committed to collaborative research and evaluation. At the same time, guideline one commits the Consortium to training programs for probationary teachers, and guideline two commits the Consortium to certification programs that are needed. This sweep of commitments suggests that the competencies required could be from the most basic to the most sophisticated. In each case, then, as the policy board reviews a request for a program for a given group, the classroom teachers will have their input as to saying whether or not, in its judgment, the group meets the required competencies.

Classroom teachers generally are affirmative of their fellow teachers' competencies. They differentiate between performance and competence. Leonard Bernstein may never have performed Mahler's first symphony, but he is certainly competent to do so. Teachers generally ascribe to fellow teachers that while they may not have performed x, y, and z, they are, nevertheless, competent to teach.

Have Teachers Contributed to the Procurement of Resources?

Teachers must ask about their role in procuring resources. Representatives from IHE, LEA administration, and SEA who are trained in grantsmanship, fund-raising, research and proposal writing not only have more experience in the art of fund-raising, but they also have the edge on understanding what resources are likely to be available, in what quantity, from whom, how soon, and under what conditions. Teachers have to learn to listen very carefully concerning the parameters under which resources are available.

For example, teachers are hesitant to get themselves involved in teacher evaluation. Why this should be so for a profession that spends half of its waking hours engaged in the process of evaluating its clientele is hard to understand. Be that as it may, teachers need to accept the fact that one of the parameters for any funds or resources available whether from the private sector or from the government will be that of evaluation: post and pretest, discrepancy between treated and untreated, summative and normative, in short, the question of evaluation. In fact, teachers are in a prime position to infuse evaluation with those dimensions of it that they sense as relevant: qualitative rather than just quantitative measurements; dialogues, diaries, discoveries and anecdotal impressions that do justice to daily classroom activities; owning up to one's own biases rather than pretending that they do not exist.

Of course, evaluation is not the only component of fund-raising. There are people and students, and materials. There are time lines and flow charts and input/output charts. As board members, teachers are beginning to speak up about members of the community who they feel will be supportive of the Consortium's activities. In a time of cutbacks, all board members will do well to listen to one another's stories of "costing out" operations or fishing trips with millionaires.

Have Teachers Had a Role in Designating Experiences to Meet Needs?

Have Teachers helped to design programs? Have they helped to design needs assessment questionnaires? Classroom teachers are

keen on differentiating between what administrators might feel are their needs and what they perceive as their needs. Teachers differentiate between stress management or teacher burnout or human relations workshops that will help them cope and other workshops that deal with building problems and involve everyone from the principal to the classroom aides. Another way to put it is to quote a teacher who said he did not, as an English teacher, need to take another course on Shakespeare, but rather a course on how to determine and deal with socio-economic differences in his classroom.

Teachers are beginning to speak out for role-derived competencies, job-embedded problems, and affective competencies. Experiences needed to develop these competencies will not come from "courses" or paper and pencil tests or from reading assignments. Teachers are becoming aware of their own "passages" and of the experiential learning that characterizes their style of learning and their style of teaching. Accordingly, as programs are presented and reviewed, teachers will take a dim view of those that prescribe experiences limited to sitting in a chair listening to a lecture. Teachers are most likely to endorse learning centers and action research and discovery learning.

Have Teachers Helped Determine the Exit Level of Their Participants?

In a preliminary way, it must be stated that classroom teachers have discussed the exiting of board members and directors and programs from a summative point of view. This is new to classroom teachers. They see that policies need to be developed to end as well as to begin the tenure of a person or a program.

Have teachers helped to determine the exit level competencies of the participants? Both the reviewing committee and the policy board itself accepted the judgment that outside authorities ought to be secured to determine if participants had met the agreed upon competencies. Teachers agree, however, that outside authorities and consultants must also have their work monitored and their tenure limited. Thus, at all points along the line, from the planning stage, to the implementation stage, to the graduation stage, to the longitudinal study stage, the classroom teachers are able to cast their vote "for" or "against."

This is a working paper. Before I conclude with questions for those interested in replicating the consortium, I must make some personal observations. The first is that interagency collaboration is on the upswing. Packaging education other than in "courses" is in. Yet the environment, suggested in guideline 9, is so important that these other issues are null and void without it. What will produce an environment of trust and respect? Only that environment where authority is delegated and autonomy is respected. Staff development, as expressed in a recent ASCD yearbook (Staff Development/Organization Development) will take place only if the organization is interested in development. If the superintendent is ready to move, staff development will move. If the superintendent endorses self-evaluation, self-evaluation will flourish. So far, classroom teachers on the policy board think they are more than mere puppets, performing in a dumb show. They feel their vote and their opinion does count. This writer feels that teachers can answer the six questions affirmatively because of the superintendent's support, and his concern that all components, the teachers included, act autonomously.

The Relevance of the Consortium to the C.E.C.

Of what relevance is the consortium to the C.E.C.? I must say that such expertise that I might have in understanding voluntary collaborative efforts first came to me by way of a book that Fred Baars (Ted Drain's assistant) suggested to me: Design for Competence Based Education in Special Education (edited by John Craemer and Joseph Gilmore and published by Syracuse University, 1974). Its blueprint for a voluntary collaborative enterprise was well outlined, and I used it to write a proposal involving two schools and an institution of higher education. While that proposal did not take wings, the idea has and is to be seen in many corners of our society. (See the May issue of Exceptional Children, 1981, in its article "Interagency Collaboration in Providing Education for Handicapped Individuals.") Voluntary collaboration is also at the heart of the staff development movement (see especially the 1981 ASCD Yearbook: Staff Development/Organization Development). For these reasons, the Consortium ought to be of interest to the C.E.C. At the D.E.C./C.E.C. conferences this ought to be even more obvious inasmuch as the Consortium's collaborative components include the S.D.P.I. and has now had the official blessing of the Division of Certification and the Board of Education.

More specifically, of what relevance is the Consortium to the classroom teacher? Unlike a number of teacher education programs, the Consortium from its inception has had a parity arrangement among classroom teachers, administrators, state department of public instruction representatives, and teachers or representatives from

institutions of higher education. This parity relation has meant that the input of the classroom teachers has been assured. Teachers may have spoken in a strident voice, or they may have appealed to reason, or they may have had a rubber stamp reflex, but, in contrast to the past input of classroom teachers into the development of teacher education institutions, the classroom teachers' input has been of a most immediate and direct nature. Specifically for every administrative voice that championed the program for coordinating teachers (seen by some teachers as the vicegerents for the administration), there has been a special education classroom teacher voice championing the program for special education teachers.

C.E.C. classroom teachers will also be interested to know that classroom teachers have input in determining the managerial structure of this teacher education institution. Quite often programs for special education students are managed by people who have been only indirectly related to special education students and/or who have been out of the classroom for man years. In the case of a consortium, there is a good chance that at least one of the teachers will be a special education teacher and a certainty that all of its teacher representatives will be classroom teachers. Since the managerial structure itself is partly composed of teachers, their sensitivity to the glory and the misery of the classroom will make itself felt. It will not be a matter of management being accountable to the classroom teachers; the classroom teachers will be part of the management.

Why else should the C.E.C. be concerned with a voluntary collaborative interagency teacher education program? Again, the establishment of levels of competency for incoming students has often been determined by every one other than a classroom teacher. As a member of the policy board and also as an ED teacher, I will want to see the following competencies already in place among the applicant for a program in special education: an awareness of the socio-economic background of students, an ability to enter homes and talk with parents, an awareness of the difference between nurturance and dominance and awareness of which one of these best suits one's own teaching style. I would also want an absence of racism. Now, one policy board member's preferences will not automatically be put in place by tomorrow, but it will be sooner or later because of compromise or trade-offs or bartering, and not because of some lame excuse like "we don't have instruments that measure those competencies."

The question regarding resources is extremely important, for it is precisely at this point that special education has been so importantly rejuvenated in the last five years. (At the present sitting, it is clear that we are once again at the crossroads.) I am referring to Public Law 94-142 and the legislation prior to and following that act that have led to the funding of special education. Special education input into a consortium arrangement should mean that it will not have to reinvent the wheel in seeking funding from the government.

The C.E.C. should also be interested in the question of designing experiences for teacher training. It is especially here

that the education of teachers of exceptional children has made its greatest impact on teacher education curriculum. I refer to the practicum experience and other hands-on preservice experiences insisted upon by special educators. It is a truism to say that the exceptional child is unique and that this uniqueness warrants unique care, and that this unique care, in turn, depends upon and therefore demands teachers who are prepared to deal with unique needs. Again, special education should take credit for this focus upon the individual. But in the upcoming shuffle for money and the thorough-going cross-questioning that the delivery of services to the exceptional will be facing, it is important to have the classroom teacher input in the designing of experiences for the special education teacher. Special education classroom teachers on the board insist that teacher preparation must not be limited to traditional courses of the lecture and listen variety.

Perhaps the most important question for the C.E.C. classroom teacher in regard to the Consortium is the question of the input of the classroom teacher into determining the exit level of competence of the participants. At this point a word must be said about the Consortium's clientele. The Consortium will not serve students who need a bachelor's degree. Nor will it serve as an option to fifth-year, sixth-year, and doctoral programs presently in place in reachable institutions. Conceivably, however, there are staff development programs and degree programs that can be worked out collaboratively. What this means is that many of the participants in the program will exit from the program prepared to take administrative and near administrative positions. It is then

very important for the classroom teacher to have some input into what the exit level competence should be expected for such prospective supervisors.

In closing, then, I would like to use the model set forth in Developmental Supervision by Carl Glickman (ASCD, 1981) as a way of addressing this last question. Glickman argues that the style of the supervisor must meet the developmental needs of the teacher. The "teacher dropout" type of teacher warrants very direct supervision. The detached but inactive and/or the dedicated but unfocused type of teacher, Glickman argues, warrants a collaborative type of supervision. With regard to the seasoned professional, Glickman says the supervisor will do well to give this colleague a wide berth, to expect assertion and argument, and to use nondirective techniques. This model suggests that the "punishment should fit the crime." And my only improvisation on this model is to suggest that "what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." That is, classroom teachers should insist that one exit criterion for any prospective supervisor in special education involve, first, that each candidate should determine his own supervision style (Glickman has a reliable instrument for determining this). Second, each candidate should be assessed along this continuum: dropout to "seasoned professional" (Glickman has a reliable instrument for this), and then be expected to indicate, given their own style and development, what their supervision style will be with these four kinds of prospective teachers. (Is there anyone who will not admit that both the ranks of the teachers and the ranks of the supervisors include both seasoned

professionals and deadwood dropouts at the extremes, with a large group of the "inactive" or "unfocused" in between?)

In a shorthand fashion, special education classroom teachers on the policy board can simply say that, having spent so many hours working on individual education plans, he or she insists that prospective supervisors be required to individualize their supervision of their future supervisees. Exit criteria from any program that the Consortium approves must include these affective competencies (that are measurable and testable). And the special education classroom teacher will be there to insist that it does.

In conclusion, I will say that I have been addressing special education classroom teachers, but I have the feeling that there are directors of special education, college level special education teachers, special education college students, and even regular educators who will be interested to know of this program, the Metrolina Educational Consortium, not only because of what it may do for them, but because of the possibilities that lie within their own community to develop a consortium of such a collaborative nature.

HERMENEUTICS OF 94-142

Interpretations may vary: control
And understanding and liberation.
Some interpret law to manage the soul,
Some use law as a source of reflection
Some use the law to become more humane.
Public Law 94-142
Like all documents asks one to explain
If one takes a tragic, classic, Greek view;
Or a redemptive, Judeo-Christian;
Or modern, scientific, technical
World view. The law for the Greeks was like fate.
For Judeo-Christian, not magical,
A source of hope and grace by God create.
For moderns, law is a matter of choice:
Not fettered by an ultramontane voice.
The modern interpretation provides
Public Law 94-142
With specifics: who is L.D., what hides
Will be flayed if money does not pass through.
Special Education is developed
To support free public education,
Where the needing student is enveloped
By normal peers, not in isolation.
Aides, crutches, prostheses, the panoply
Of modern tools will normalize student.
As an agent, teacher in strategy
And the teacher-learning environment
Will remove the child's deficits, restraints,
And there will be a school without complaints.
The Tragic view in irony notes our
Blatant differentia, exceptional
From the normal who have all the power.
Elitism would be more functional.
Here there is no room for the heroic.
Behaviors quantified and modified.
There is no place for values of fate's trick.
You cannot get from outside to inside.
If decisions are reached by consensus
Vote, then there is no way for arete
To get beyond the masses, to the plus
Emerging from the aristocracy.
In action there is no discovery,
This would limit what it means to be free.
Judeo-Christian view is more profound
Than modern control, less trapped than Greek fate.
Like Shakespeare sees each person in the round,
Without a fool's cap upon his bald pate.
For if this tradition blames the victim
It also provides seeds of redemption.
If it issues biblical stern dictum
It also provides for one's exemption.
More insights than fundamentalism
Or of technology's hermeneutics
More equilibrium than the prism
More belief than position of skeptics.
The exceptional is redeemed by law,
Retains humor in face of the last straw.

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REFLECTIONS

Teacher education is a parlous
Thing, and its effectiveness depends
On the viewpoint that is most garrulous.
One of these says that schooling only lends
Support to the establishment, that schools
Add a frill to the ideology.
Thus teachers may as well be mindless fools,
And teacher-proof plans the best strategy.
Teaching can also be seen as a plan
For moving working-class people into
The middle class, making an American
Out of Protestant, Catholic, or Jew.

Another viewpoint, although small, contends
That teacher education should critique
The corporations and their dividends,
As well as what Johnny does once a week.

Teachers in a consortium might well think
About these three views to see where one fits.
There is no reason to make a big stink
In having to remove society's zits
If one's profession is an armature
Of power elite, the conglomerates'
Knowledge, or the scientists' sinecure,
Or the rest of the world's illiterates.

From this view, teachers are the whipping boy
For every cultural debacle,
And are evaluation's little toy,
By objective testing held in shackle.

If teachers' concern is salary--
Need to follow the lead of I.B.M.'s
Results, with or without humanity,
And package instructions like Virginia Slims.

Education as the escalator
Means that teacher education must be crisp
Opportunity without objector,
Declare equality without a lisp.

REFLECTIONS (Continued)

Generations of migrants have entered
Schools and moved up into the middle class
(Curriculum society-centered)
And teachers have also moved up en masse.
Teacher education needs to model
Not on the executive round table
But on the climbing plane, open throttle,
Making dynamic increasingly stable.
Consortium teachers ought to insist
That consortium help teacher cutback,
And, by whatever means, help them resist
Further erosion into their paychecks.

The critique of society for some
Is with a critical analysis
By writing poetry. One may seem dumb
Criticizing academic paralysis.
Teacher education by consortium
Must sniff the privet and magnolia,
Sort out symbology of Christendom,
Enlist scientists' paraphenalia,
Be as open game as humanities:
Radical questioning must be answered.
Everyone's, including one's own, vanities
Must be painstakingly inspected.

Education is the florabunda
Rising out of thorns and yellow foliage,
It is the beauty shorn from the tundra
Passing quietly out of the ice age.

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ROBERT PENN WARREN AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

It is amazing after a good pee
How comfortable you feel all snug as you
Look down six or seven miles at the sea
Of clouds, furrowed by front, barely in view
As the sun sinks. The stewardesses go
Back and forth to get our micro-warmed meal.
Tennessee and Ohio pass below.
I think of Warren and the glint of steel
Always shining in his yards at evening.
I want to write this pœm before he
Dies to let him know he taught me to sing
For sick and sad in abnormality.
Roads and fences, even rivers, are straight
As we westward move away from Southern hate.

Edward W. Milner, (c) Copyright, August 12, 1980.

MEANING

A wise old carpenter taught me to drive
My nail so true it would sing. A young man
Taught me my art and anxiety strive
To be the same thing. Personal knowledge can
Dwell in your body, and one paradigm
May be used to explain all there is.
Focal and distal aren't at the same time
Art and our mind's generalities.
What is left is left for discovery:
I have discovered that the sun is hot;
That all I know shapes all known by me;
Science reversible, senses are not.
Old carpenter and young philosopher
Work in my mind to remove the right blur.

Edward W. Milner, (c) Copyright, September 26, 1981

CULTURAL LITERACY

My students have problems with a passion,
Caught in their dreams controlled by suspicions;
Unlike their peers, not compelled by fashion,
Most rungs in their webs of life are omissions.
I could tell you stories of these citizens,
And you would want to start a new program.
But I say let them paint out their visions,
Let them lift the veil and not give a damn.
Instead of control, teach them creation,
Give them science, math, and social studies,
Teach them in soccer that cooperation
Is passing the ball back to their buddies.
These are students of the periphery,
Spare them from humanistic reverie.

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